

December 18, 1929
Box 273
League City, Texas.

Dear Kirby + Mary
+ Betty + Jean -

I know that this is rather sudden but I am writing to inform you two little angels (?) that you have recently acquired an Uncle John. I figured that you didn't have enough relatives so I'm doing my best to help out on the shortage. He's a pretty big help - about six feet tall. Can't say Santa Claus didn't send you

something big this year. O, yes, he is blond and his name is John L. Dolson. So we will both be J. L. Dolson! And his birthday is on January 2, that is the same as Kirby Junior's, isn't it? Of course, this sounds rather sudden to you folks but I have been going with him almost a year and he started informing me that he was going to marry me right at the first so you see, the only really sudden part of it is the way we are breaking the news. I told your parents about it a couple of months ago but you see, they write to me once in a while and of course, I have to answer the letters. I believe you two are worse than I am about writing and I am bad enough. Mama says she is still looking for a letter from you. I've just about given up hopes myself but maybe this will jar you into writing.

I tried to educate him right by having him read the books I got up there. He is young and open minded but I fear he has had considerable education before.

However, I don't think that his education was all confined to the subject of being a good husband. But I must admit that for the few days we have been married he has been an extra good husband, sometimes at considerable inconvenience to himself.

We took a short trip over to Louisiana to get married because according to our new Texas Law you have to publish your "intentions to marry" for three days in advance and that is a terrible lot of publicity in a little town like this. Everybody in town knew about it the first

time he asked me for a date and I wouldn't be surprised if they knew which show we were going to before we decided on it.

This place sure has been an education to me, I never lived in a small town before.

We have been having perfectly beautiful summer weather, warm enough for a short sleeved dress out of doors and now this morning we've got the dog-gonest norther you ever did see.

This wind is strong enough to blow your eyebrows off and cold enough to freeze 'em while they're falling.

Don't guess Santa Claus is going to pay any attention to us this year. We are not rich enough to help him do any shopping nor poor enough to make anybody feel sorry for us. But I guess we'll be pretty happy anyway, your grandmother has already got an engagement with a turkey and, you know, she is a pretty good cook.

Business is lull these days. This is the dulllest season of the year for our kind of business. People who can stay at home in this kind of weather just naturally stay there.

Got a letter from your Mother and Dad yesterday addressed to Mr + Mrs J. L. Dolson! Funny, I didn't tell them when I would get married and their letter arrived on just exactly the right day. If they had tried to do that it never would have happened.

They surely must be having a good time. Their letters sound very interesting. We have to look at the map every once in a while. I didn't have the slightest idea where Iraq was located but we looked it up

and there really was such a thing.

If you have any good advice for newlyweds, send it on. Of course, we'll probably get a lot of good advice but it sounds better from some people than from others.

I want you two little darlings to take good care of your Aunt Betty and Uncle Gene. From what I hear they have been doing such bad things as getting sick and getting hurt and we can't have any of that.

Love & luck and the best Christmas Wishes (I'm afraid I can't send you anything more expensive).

Johnnie Louise Wolson!

1929

To the Persons Invited to the Meeting Called for December 15th
by Paul H. Douglas, Sherwood Eddy and Norman Thomas:

The meeting convened at the International House, New York City, with the following persons present: Devere Allen, B. H. Beckhart, J. C. Bennett, Alfred L. Bernheim, Paul Blanshard, Bruce Bliven, Leroy E. Bowman, Paul F. Brissenden, Everett R. Clinchy, McAlister Coleman, Bruce Curry, John W. Darr, John Dewey, Mrs. Mary Dickson, Paul H. Douglas, Sherwood Eddy, Harrison S. Elliott, Wayne Evans, Edwin Fairley, Frederick V. Field, Nathan Fine, J. B. S. Hardman, S. Ralph Harlow, Erdman Harris, Alfred Hayes, Arthur Garfield Hays, Jesse H. Holmes, F. Ernest Johnson, Paul Jones, Paul U. Kellogg, Harry W. Laidler, Edward Levinson, Robert Morss Lovett, Patrick M. Malin, Henry R. Mussey, A. J. Muste, M. A. Myers, Kirby Page, Evelyn Preston, H. S. Raushenbush, L. H. Sage, John Nevin Sayre, Paul Sifton, William B. Spofford, Louis Stanley, Norman Thomas, Constance L. Todd, Oswald Garrison Villard, B. C. Vladeck, Harry F. Ward, Arthur Warner, Colston E. Warner, Helen Sumner Woodbury.

Paul H. Douglas was elected Chairman for the day and Kirby Page, Secretary.

At the end of the day the following Provisional Executive Committee was elected and authorized to proceed with the selection of an Executive Committee of twenty-five members and a National Committee of one hundred members for an organization to be known as "The Third Party League" or some other name to be determined by its members: John Dewey, Paul H. Douglas, Sherwood Eddy, James Weldon Johnson, Mrs. Florence Kelley, Robert Morss Lovett, A. J. Muste, Kirby Page, Miss Evelyn Preston, Norman Thomas, Oswald Garrison Villard.

It was tentatively agreed that the organization should have the following purpose and structure:

I. Functions.

1. It would be a clearing house for gathering information concerning the liberal agencies now working in the field of politics and would make an effort to bring into closer relations and help to correlate the activities of the various groups.

2. Research.

- a. Into specific problems and difficulties which stand in the way of a new social order.
- b. Into the whole question of strategy and tactics as to the most effective means of reaching conservative groups, with an especial effort to understand the reasons for the prevailing conservatism throughout the country.
- c. Into the nature of the planks which should form the platform of the political party needed to cope with these problems.
- d. Into the resources now available for such a procedure.
- e. Into the kind of political organization which is needed.

3. Action.

- a. The production and distribution of literature, with especial care to avoid overlapping with existing agencies.
- b. The encouragement of local groups which would have somewhat the same functions in their communities as the national group would have for the entire country.

II. Organization.

1. Membership.

- a. It was suggested that membership be open to any person who is in sympathy with the spirit of the two resolutions passed concerning the need for increasing social control and for the encouragement of a political party movement as distinct from the Republican and Democratic Parties, with a nominal membership fee of \$1.00.
- b. A motion prevailed that we cooperate with existing groups and that those in harmony with our purpose be permitted to affiliate with the national movement upon the payment of \$5.00, and that we encourage the formation of new groups wherever such action is needed.

2. National Committee.

It was deemed advisable to have a national committee of approximately 100 persons, representing different sections of the country and various groups.

3. Executive Committee.

It was decided that an executive committee of approximately 25 persons would be needed, but that it would be unwise to elect all members at this preliminary stage.

4. Name.

Various names were suggested for the organization, including the following: Third Party League, League for Independent Political Action, League for Political Re-Alignment, Labor Party League, Political Education Society, American Fabian Society.

At the first meeting of the Provisional Executive Committee, Kirby Page was elected Chairman and Miss Evelyn Preston, Vice-Chairman.

At the request of the Provisional Executive Committee, Professor Douglas drew up the following tentative statement of the principles underlying this movement:

The last election has left progressively spirited Americans with no satisfactory political alternative to the attitude of complete satisfaction with things as they are which is typified by the Republican Party. The differences between the Republican and Democratic Parties were never great, but with the abandonment by the latter of its historic advocacy of a low tariff, these distinctions have become virtually non-existent. The contest of last fall revealed an almost complete

identity of opinion between these two parties on fundamental economic questions. The election turned on no such significant issues but on the relative preference for the sidewalks of Main Street as compared with those of New York, for Protestantism as compared with Catholicism, on prohibition, and on such frivolous questions as the relative social grace which each candidate and his wife would display in the White House.

One result at least of the election is clear: if the Democratic Party, with personally the most attractive candidate which it is likely to nominate, could carry only eight states, there is little hope that it can ever be transformed into an effective instrument for progressive politics. Nor did the large popular vote for Smith have any real progressive significance. It was composed primarily of the dry Protestant voters of the South and the wet Catholics of the North. These two groups are fundamentally hostile in their point of view and neither of them has any real concern for progressive principles. It is, therefore, purely a day-dream to believe that economic liberals have any chance of capturing the Democratic Party. The Bourbons of the South and the boss-ridden Democratic machines of the North can be trusted to prevent that.

Nor does the formation of blocs cutting across the old parties afford any real relief. It is difficult enough at best for them to capture legislative districts and states, and even then it will be found that voters with fundamentally similar views will be ranged in opposite camps at the time of national elections, being Republicans in some states and Democrats in others. Their votes and influence, therefore, largely cancel each other. Even Congressional blocs, since they cannot control the President, will be ineffective. Furthermore, a proposal to work inside the two corrupt old parties has absolutely no power of quickening the pulses of the great mass of thinking progressives who know that the inevitable end of such a program would be frustration and futility.

The way out would seem to be for economic progressives to leave the old parties, where they are unable effectively to determine policy and where they largely cancel each other, and to help build up another party which would become for this country what the British Labor Party is for England. Such a party could not advocate laissez-faire in a country where, despite the so-called prosperity, the earnings of two-third of the urban unskilled workers are seemingly insufficient to support their dependents upon the standard laid down by relief societies, and where one-third of those who reach the age of 65 have absolutely no property to help maintain them. Such a party would realize that an increasing degree of social control over economic life is necessary in order to give to individuals an opportunity for development in a society where surplus income, wealth and consequently power are concentrated in such relatively few hands. Economic progressives would, it is believed, rally around a party which would boldly proclaim these principles and which would in detail work for such measures as:

- 1) The rapid extension of public ownership of the generation and transmission of power, thus ensuring to the consumers and to industry the economies of an integrated super-power system, which otherwise will fall into private hands.

- 2) Public ownership and democratic management of the coal industry, with a view to closing down the surplus mines, transferring without hardship the excess miners, integrating the coal mines with the development of power and giving greater freedom in their working lives to the miners.

- 3) The skimming off through high progressive taxes on incomes,

inheritances and the increase in land values of those surplus gains which are not necessary to induce effective service to be forthcoming but which are the result of monopoly, and the reception of which largely causes the maintenance and growth of inequality. These sums could be used to help socialize industry and to provide for the poor that minimum of health and recreation which should be the right of all children.

4) The provision of an adequate system of protection against the industrial risks of unemployment, ill-health and old age. This calls for unemployment insurance, health insurance and old age pensions. It also calls for a system of public employment exchanges, for a program of public works to help take up the slack of employment and for an extension of free and nominally priced medical and health services to those who at present cannot afford adequate care.

5) The freeing of labor from the present legal restrictions which, in the form of "yellow-dog" contracts, injunctions, and virtual prohibition of boycotting and effective peaceful picketing, help at present to render trade-unionism ineffective.

6) A program for a legal minimum wage system which will guarantee to both men and women workers and to those actually dependent upon them the minimum needed to maintain physical and social efficiency.

7) The fostering of consumers' cooperative societies which will realize for the consumers the advantages of chain store retailing and which will develop self-government in the field of distribution.

8) A program of farm relief which, by lowering the tariff on manufactured goods, would help to readjust the present disparity between the prices of agricultural and manufactured commodities by decreasing the prices of the goods the farmers buy and which by building up a greater European market would increase the prices of what he sells. The government fostering of cooperatively managed wheat and cotton pools, the provision of adequate farm-credits, and insurance against natural calamities would also be of great assistance.

9) A sincere and increasing effort to eliminate the economic and political causes of war. A substitution of conference, conciliation, arbitration and judicial processes for our present policy of domination in Central America and the Caribbean; cooperation with other nations in building up an adequate structure of international organization, in outlawing war and in securing naval and military disarmament; participation in all agencies designed to help keep the peace and remove the reasons for war.

That there are great difficulties in the way of building up such a party is obvious. The division of our country into forty-eight states, the independence of the executive, the powers of the judiciary, the temptation which the direct primary always gives for excursions into the old parties are all obstacles which do not exist in Europe. The chief obstacle lies, however, in the desire of liberals to be with the winning side and their reluctance to build slowly an effective party of opposition which is founded on principles and the economic interests of the great mass of the people. Yet it is only thus that parties can be built. We believe that an effective party can be built upon these principles by the cooperation of the socialists, the progressive farming element, the manual workers, if and when the unskilled and semi-skilled become organized, and by liberal spirited men and women of good will. We believe that there could be no more creative force in politics than such a movement and we invite all those who feel similarly to join with us in attempting to effect such a political regrouping.

John Dewey was chairman of the National Com

Please fill out and return promptly to
Kirby Page, 347 Madison Avenue, New York City

1. Do you favor the formation of such an organization as described herein?
2. Do you desire to become a member of such an organization?
3. What name for the organization do you prefer?
("The Third Party League" was recommended by the Provisional Executive Committee as more accurately and quickly indicating the nature of the organization.)
4. What men and women would you suggest for
(a) The Executive Committee

Name

Address

Position

- (b) The National Committee

Name

Address

Position

5. What changes in the statement of principles by Professor Douglas would you suggest?

Name:

Street Address:

City and State:

Position:

original

PERSONS INVITED TO BECOME MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

of League for Independent Political Action

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| ✓ Abbott, W. Lewis | Gilbert, Joseph | ✓ Meiklejohn, Alexander |
| Addams, Jane | ● Goodrich, Carter | ● Mitchell, Brandies <i>Broadway</i> |
| Anderson, J. F. | Gray, John H. | Moore, Fred Atkins |
| Anderson, John B. | Gustafson, R. G. | ● Mussey, Henry R. |
|
 |
 |
 |
| ✓ Barnes, Harry Elmer | Hamilton, Walton | Neuman, Henry |
| Beard, Charles A. | ✓ Hapgood, Powers |
 |
| Beardsley, Samuel | ✓ Hapgood, William P. | ✓ Parsons, Bishop Edward L. |
| Bing, Alexander M. | Hayes, Alfred | Pound, Roscoe |
| ✓ Blanshard, Paul | ● Head, Walter <i>See</i> |
 |
| ✓ Bowman, Le Roy | Heist, A. A. | Richberg, Donald |
| Brissenden, Paul | Herring, Hubert | Ryan, John A. |
| ✓ Brophy, John | Herstein, Lillian |
 |
| ● Brown, J. H. | Hillman, Sydney | ✓ Sayre, John Nevin |
| Barke, John P. | ✓ Hoerle, Frank | ✓ Scudder, Vida |
|
 | Holmes, John Haynes | ● Short, Wallace M. |
| Causey, James M. <i>H.</i> | ● Hope, John | Soule, George |
| ✓ Cavert, Samuel M. | Hull, Hannah Clothier | ✓ Spofford, Wm. B. |
| Chase, Stuart |
 | ● Starkey, Peter <i>Frank T.</i> |
| Cherrington, Ben M. | Isles, Harold | Stolberg, Benjamin |
| Cochran, William F. | Israel, Rabbi Edward L. |
 |
| ✓ Coe, George F. |
 | ✓ Tiegen, H. G. |
| ✓ Coleman, McAlister | ✓ Jones, Paul | ✓ Todd, Constance |
| ✓ Collins, George |
 | ● Todd, Laurence |
| Commons, John R. | Kammerer, Percy G. | Tugwell, Rexford G. |
|
 | ● Kelley, Nicholas |
 |
| Denny, Ludwell | Kennedy, John C. | ✓ Van Waters, Miriam |
| ✓ Du Bois, W. E. B. | Kirchwey, C. W. |
 |
| Duncan, Thomas |
 | Walsh, Frank |
|
 | Lackland, George S. | ✓ Warne, C. A. |
| ✓ Everett, Helen | La Follette, Fola | Wise, Rabbi Stephen S. |
|
 | ✓ La Monte, Caroline | Wolman, Leo |
| ✓ Fairley, Edwin | ✓ Lapp, John A. | Woodward, W. E. |
| ✓ Fine, Nathan | ● Lefkovitz, Abraham |
 |
| Fitzpatrick, John | Long, Cedric |
 |
| ✓ Floyd, William |
 |
 |
| ● Frank, Walter | McConnell, Bishop F. J. |
 |
| Frankfurter, Felix | ✓ Mahoney, William |
 |
| Friedman, Herbert J. | Mautner, B. H. |
 |

original

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(Have already accepted membership on the Committee.)

John Dewey
Paul H. Douglas
Sherwood Eddy
James Weldon Johnson
Robert Morss Lovett
A. J. Muste
Kirby Page
Evelyn Preston
Norman Thomas
Oswald Garrison Villard

ADDITIONAL PERSONS INVITED TO BECOME MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

~~Devere Allen~~
~~Bruce Bliven~~
~~Raymond L. Buell~~
~~Jerome Davis~~
~~Morris L. Ernst~~
~~Helen Hamlin Fincke~~
~~Lewis Gannet~~
~~Arthur Garfield Hays~~
~~Jesse Holmes~~
~~Freda Kirchwey~~
~~Harry W. Laidler~~
~~E. C. Lindeman~~
~~James H. Maurer~~
~~Reinhold Niebuhr~~
Amos Pinchot
~~Mrs. Glenn Plumb~~
~~Joseph Schlossberg~~
B. C. Vladeck.

PERSONS PRESENT ON DECEMBER 15TH OR JANUARY 26TH

Allen, Devere
Artman, J. M.

Beckhart, B. H.
Bennett, J. C.
Bernheim, Alfred L.
Blanshard, Paul
Bliven Bruce
Bowman, Leroy E.
Boynton, Robert H.
Brissenden, Paul F.
Buell, Raymond L.

Clinchy, Everett R.
Coleman, McAlister
Curry, Bruce

Darr, John W.
Davidson, Roland G.
Dewey, John
Dickson, Mrs. Mary
Douglas, Paul H.

Eddy, Sherwood
Elliott, Arthur E.
Elliott Harrison S.
Ernst, Margaret S.
Ernst Morris, L.
Evans, Wayne

Fairley, Edwin
Field, Frederick V.
Fincke, Helen Hamlin
Fine, Nathan
Fletcher, Joseph

Hardman, J.B.S.
Harlow, S. Ralph
Harris, Erdman
Hayes, Alfred
Hays, Arthur Garfield
Herring, Hubert C.
Holmes, Jesse H.

Johnson, F. Ernest
Jones, Paul

Kellogg, Paul U.

Laidler, Harry W.
Levinson, Edward
Lovett, Robert Morss

Malin, Patrick M.
Mussey, Henry R.
Muste, A. J.
Myers, M.A.

Niebuhr, Reinhold

Page, Kirby
Porter, Paul
Preston, Evelyn

Raushenbush, H. S.

Sage, L. H.
Sayre, John Nevin
Sifton, Paul
Smith, Treadwell
Spofford, William B.
Stanley, Louis
Stearns, Frances
Stolberg, Benjamin

Thomas, Norman
Todd, Constance L.

Van Dusen, Henry P.
Villard, Oswald Garrison
Vladeck, B. C.

Ward, Harry F.
Warne, Colston E.
Warner, Arthur
Woodbury, Helen Sumner

TENTATIVE BASIS OF THE LEAGUE FOR INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION

The league for Independent Political Action is a body of individuals who are committed personally and as a group to the encouragement of the formation of an opposition party movement as distinguished from the Democratic and Republican parties that will be based on the theory of increasing social control.

I. FUNCTIONS.

1. Clearing House.

It would be a clearing house for gathering information concerning the liberal agencies now working in the field of politics and would make an effort to bring into closer relations and help to correlate the activities of the various groups.

2. Research.

- a. Into specific problems and difficulties which stand in the way of a new social order.
- b. Into the whole question of strategy and tactics as to the most effective means of reaching conservative groups, with an especial effort to understand the reasons for the prevailing conservatism throughout the country.
- c. Into the nature of the planks which should form the platform of the political party needed to cope with these problems.
- d. Into the resources now available for such a procedure.
- e. Into the kind of political organization which is needed.

3. Action.

- a. The production and distribution of literature, with especial care to avoid overlapping with existing agencies.
- b. The encouragement of local groups which would have somewhat the same functions in their communities as the national group would have for the entire country.

II. PRINCIPLES

The way out of the present political dilemma would seem to be for economic progressives to leave the old parties, where they are unable effectively to determine policy and where they largely cancel each other, and to help build up another party which would become for this country what the British Labor Party is for England. Such a party could not advocate laissez faire in a country where, despite the so-called prosperity, the earnings of two-thirds of the urban unskilled workers are seemingly insufficient to support their dependents upon the standard laid down by relief societies, and where one-third of those who reach the age of 65 have absolutely no property to help maintain them. Such a party would realize that an increasing degree of social control over economic life is necessary in order to give to individuals an opportunity for development in a society where surplus income, wealth and consequently power are concentrated

in such relatively few hands. Economic progressives would, it is believed, rally around a party which would boldly proclaim these principles and which would in detail work for such measure as:

1. The rapid extension of public ownership of the generation and transmission of power, thus ensuring to the consumers and to industry the economies of an integrated super-power system, which otherwise will fall into private hands.
2. Public ownership and democratic management of the coal industry, with a view to closing down the surplus mines, transferring without hardship the excess miners, integrating the coal mines with the development of power and giving greater freedom in their working lives to the miners.
3. The skimming off through high progressive taxes on incomes, inheritances and the increase in land values of those surplus gains which are not necessary to induce effective service to be forthcoming but which are the result of monopoly, and the reception of which largely causes the maintenance and growth of inequality. These sums could be used to help socialize industry and to provide for the poor that minimum of health and recreation which should be the right of all children.
4. The provision of an adequate system of protection against the industrial risks of unemployment, ill-health and old age. This calls for unemployment insurance, health insurance and old age pensions. It also calls for a system of public employment exchanges, for a program of public works to help take up the slack of employment and for an extension of free and nominally priced medical and health services to those who at present cannot afford adequate care.
5. The freeing of labor from the present legal restrictions which, in the form of "yellow dog" contracts, injunctions, and virtual prohibition of boycotting and effective peaceful picketing, help at present to render trade unionism ineffective.
6. A program for a legal minimum wage system which will guarantee to both men and women workers and to those actually dependent upon them the minimum needed to maintain physical and social efficiency.
7. The fostering of consumers' cooperative societies which will realize for the consumers the advantages of chain store retailing and which will develop self-government in the field of distribution.
8. A program of farm relief which, by lowering the tariff on manufactured goods, would help to readjust the present disparity between the prices of agricultural and manufactured commodities by decreasing the prices of the goods the farmers buy and which by building up a greater European market would increase the prices of what he sells. The government fostering of cooperatively managed wheat and cotton pools, the provision of adequate farm-credits, and insurance against natural calamities would also be of great assistance.
9. A sincere and increasing effort to eliminate the economic and political causes of war. A substitution of conference, conciliation, arbitration and judicial processes for our present policy of domination in Central America and the Caribbean; cooperation with other nations in building up an adequate structure of international organization, in outlawing war and in securing naval and military disarmament; participation in all agencies designed to help keep the peace and remove the reasons for war.

That there are great difficulties in the way of building up such a party is obvious. The division of our country into forty-eight states, the independence of the executive, the powers of the judiciary, the temptation which the direct primary always gives for excursions into the old parties are all obstacles which do not exist in Europe. We believe, however, that an effective party can be built upon these principles by the cooperation of the socialists, the progressive farming element, the manual workers, if and when the unskilled and semi-skilled become organized, and by liberal spirited men and women of good will. We believe that there could be no more creative force in politics than such a movement and we invite all those who feel similarly to join with us in attempting to effect such a political realignment.

Mon - Dec 31st

Dear People, I got home from
Houston Sat. & brought my teeth two
were them in fact, but my gums are
very tender, & they hurt some, so I will
take them out fast time, just think of
having thirty dollars, counting off the
fare home: Leah & Norma put themselves
out quite a bit to help me, I have
money left so can other things I need -
the checks came to Mary while I was
away, plenty early, thanks, F. & M. came
up Sunday & I stopped at Parrys, all of
them on the supper, F. & M. staid with
us nights, & for all meals, but drove
down between times, as with them I
tried to beg off, but no they would

understand how I feel, & I was
afraid to say any thing.

We eat our turkey, & talked of you
people all along; had beautiful
weather all the week - but its
trying to rain now, & I need to wash
missed doing so last week - oh - yes
Leah & Norma gave us each a pair of
house slippers, coats, stockings, & washing
material, P. & E, a pretty framed picture
& a lot of fruit, Marguerite Howard
a fine hand R. each. That's all
but plenty, the Flu is still raging
but our people have escaped so far
best guide & keep you all
Mother

1929

To the Persons Invited to the Meeting Called for December 15th
by Paul H. Douglas, Sherwood Eddy and Norman Thomas:

The meeting convened at the International House, New York City, with the following persons present: Devere Allen, B. H. Beckhart, J. C. Bennett, Alfred L. Bernheim, Paul Blanshard, Bruce Bliven, Leroy E. Bowman, Paul F. Brissenden, Everett R. Clinchy, McAlister Coleman, Bruce Curry, John W. Darr, John Dewey, Mrs. Mary Dickson, Paul H. Douglas, Sherwood Eddy, Harrison S. Elliott, Wayne Evans, Edwin Fairley, Frederick V. Field, Nathan Fine, J. B. S. Hardman, S. Ralph Harlow, Erdman Harris, Alfred Hayes, Arthur Garfield Hays, Jesse H. Holmes, F. Ernest Johnson, Paul Jones, Paul U. Kellogg, Harry W. Laidler, Edward Levinson, Robert Morss Lovett, Patrick M. Malin, Henry R. Mussey, A. J. Muste, M. A. Myers, Kirby Page, Evelyn Preston, H. S. Raushenbush, L. H. Sage, John Nevin Sayre, Paul Sifton, William B. Spofford, Louis Stanley, Norman Thomas, Constance L. Todd, Oswald Garrison Villard, B. C. Vladeck, Harry F. Ward, Arthur Warner, Colston E. Warner, Helen Sumner Woodbury.

Paul H. Douglas was elected Chairman for the day and Kirby Page, Secretary.

At the end of the day the following Provisional Executive Committee was elected and authorized to proceed with the selection of an Executive Committee of twenty-five members and a National Committee of one hundred members for an organization to be known as "The Third Party League" or some other name to be determined by its members: John Dewey, Paul H. Douglas, Sherwood Eddy, James Weldon Johnson, Mrs. Florence Kelley, Robert Morss Lovett, A. J. Muste, Kirby Page, Miss Evelyn Preston, Norman Thomas, Oswald Garrison Villard.

It was tentatively agreed that the organization should have the following purpose and structure:

I. Functions.

1. It would be a clearing house for gathering information concerning the liberal agencies now working in the field of politics and would make an effort to bring into closer relations and help to correlate the activities of the various groups.
2. Research.
 - a. Into specific problems and difficulties which stand in the way of a new social order.
 - b. Into the whole question of strategy and tactics as to the most effective means of reaching conservative groups, with an especial effort to understand the reasons for the prevailing conservatism throughout the country.
 - c. Into the nature of the planks which should form the platform of the political party needed to cope with these problems.
 - d. Into the resources now available for such a procedure.
 - e. Into the kind of political organization which is needed.

3. Action.

- a. The production and distribution of literature, with especial care to avoid overlapping with existing agencies.
- b. The encouragement of local groups which would have somewhat the same functions in their communities as the national group would have for the entire country.

II. Organization.

1. Membership.

- a. It was suggested that membership be open to any person who is in sympathy with the spirit of the two resolutions passed concerning the need for increasing social control and for the encouragement of a political party movement as distinct from the Republican and Democratic Parties, with a nominal membership fee of \$1.00.
- b. A motion prevailed that we cooperate with existing groups and that those in harmony with our purpose be permitted to affiliate with the national movement upon the payment of \$5.00, and that we encourage the formation of new groups wherever such action is needed.

2. National Committee.

It was deemed advisable to have a national committee of approximately 100 persons, representing different sections of the country and various groups.

3. Executive Committee.

It was decided that an executive committee of approximately 25 persons would be needed, but that it would be unwise to elect all members at this preliminary stage.

4. Name.

Various names were suggested for the organization, including the following: Third Party League, League for Independent Political Action, League for Political Re-Alignment, Labor Party League, Political Education Society, American Fabian Society.

At the first meeting of the Provisional Executive Committee, Kirby Page was elected Chairman and Miss Evelyn Preston, Vice-Chairman.

At the request of the Provisional Executive Committee, Professor Douglas drew up the following tentative statement of the principles underlying this movement:

The last election has left progressively spirited Americans with no satisfactory political alternative to the attitude of complete satisfaction with things as they are which is typified by the Republican Party. The differences between the Republican and Democratic Parties were never great, but with the abandonment by the latter of its historic advocacy of a low tariff, these distinctions have become virtually non-existent. The contest of last fall revealed an almost complete

identity of opinion between these two parties on fundamental economic questions. The election turned on no such significant issues but on the relative preference for the sidewalks of Main Street as compared with those of New York, for Protestantism as compared with Catholicism, on prohibition, and on such frivolous questions as the relative social grace which each candidate and his wife would display in the White House.

One result at least of the election is clear: if the Democratic Party, with personally the most attractive candidate which it is likely to nominate, could carry only eight states, there is little hope that it can ever be transformed into an effective instrument for progressive politics. Nor did the large popular vote for Smith have any real progressive significance. It was composed primarily of the dry Protestant voters of the South and the wet Catholics of the North. These two groups are fundamentally hostile in their point of view and neither of them has any real concern for progressive principles. It is, therefore, purely a day-dream to believe that economic liberals have any chance of capturing the Democratic Party. The Bourbons of the South and the boss-ridden Democratic machines of the North can be trusted to prevent that.

Nor does the formation of blocs cutting across the old parties afford any real relief. It is difficult enough at best for them to capture legislative districts and states, and even then it will be found that voters with fundamentally similar views will be ranged in opposite camps at the time of national elections, being Republicans in some states and Democrats in others. Their votes and influence, therefore, largely cancel each other. Even Congressional blocs, since they cannot control the President, will be ineffective. Furthermore, a proposal to work inside the two corrupt old parties has absolutely no power of quickening the pulses of the great mass of thinking progressives who know that the inevitable end of such a program would be frustration and futility.

The way out would seem to be for economic progressives to leave the old parties, where they are unable effectively to determine policy and where they largely cancel each other, and to help build up another party which would become for this country what the British Labor Party is for England. Such a party could not advocate laissez-faire in a country where, despite the so-called prosperity, the earnings of two-third of the urban unskilled workers are seemingly insufficient to support their dependents upon the standard laid down by relief societies, and where one-third of those who reach the age of 65 have absolutely no property to help maintain them. Such a party would realize that an increasing degree of social control over economic life is necessary in order to give to individuals an opportunity for development in a society where surplus income, wealth and consequently power are concentrated in such relatively few hands. Economic progressives would, it is believed, rally around a party which would boldly proclaim these principles and which would in detail work for such measures as:

- 1) The rapid extension of public ownership of the generation and transmission of power, thus ensuring to the consumers and to industry the economies of an integrated super-power system, which otherwise will fall into private hands.

- 2) Public ownership and democratic management of the coal industry, with a view to closing down the surplus mines, transferring without hardship the excess miners, integrating the coal mines with the development of power and giving greater freedom in their working lives to the miners.

- 3) The skimming off through high progressive taxes on incomes,

inheritances and the increase in land values of those surplus gains which are not necessary to induce effective service to be forthcoming but which are the result of monopoly, and the reception of which largely causes the maintenance and growth of inequality. These sums could be used to help socialize industry and to provide for the poor that minimum of health and recreation which should be the right of all children.

4) The provision of an adequate system of protection against the industrial risks of unemployment, ill-health and old age. This calls for unemployment insurance, health insurance and old age pensions. It also calls for a system of public employment exchanges, for a program of public works to help take up the slack of employment and for an extension of free and nominally priced medical and health services to those who at present cannot afford adequate care.

5) The freeing of labor from the present legal restrictions which, in the form of "yellow-dog" contracts, injunctions, and virtual prohibition of boycotting and effective peaceful picketing, help at present to render trade-unionism ineffective.

6) A program for a legal minimum wage system which will guarantee to both men and women workers and to those actually dependent upon them the minimum needed to maintain physical and social efficiency.

7) The fostering of consumers' cooperative societies which will realize for the consumers the advantages of chain store retailing and which will develop self-government in the field of distribution.

8) A program of farm relief which, by lowering the tariff on manufactured goods, would help to readjust the present disparity between the prices of agricultural and manufactured commodities by decreasing the prices of the goods the farmers buy and which by building up a greater European market would increase the prices of what he sells. The government fostering of cooperatively managed wheat and cotton pools, the provision of adequate farm-credits, and insurance against natural calamities would also be of great assistance.

9) A sincere and increasing effort to eliminate the economic and political causes of war. A substitution of conference, conciliation, arbitration and judicial processes for our present policy of domination in Central America and the Caribbean; cooperation with other nations in building up an adequate structure of international organization, in outlawing war and in securing naval and military disarmament; participation in all agencies designed to help keep the peace and remove the reasons for war.

That there are great difficulties in the way of building up such a party is obvious. The division of our country into forty-eight states, the independence of the executive, the powers of the judiciary, the temptation which the direct primary always gives for excursions into the old parties are all obstacles which do not exist in Europe. The chief obstacle lies, however, in the desire of liberals to be with the winning side and their reluctance to build slowly an effective party of opposition which is founded on principles and the economic interests of the great mass of the people. Yet it is only thus that parties can be built. We believe that an effective party can be built upon these principles by the cooperation of the socialists, the progressive farming element, the manual workers, if and when the unskilled and semi-skilled become organized, and by liberal spirited men and women of good will. We believe that there could be no more creative force in politics than such a movement and we invite all those who feel similarly to join with us in attempting to effect such a political regrouping.

File copy

Christmas day. 1929. Calcutta.

Dear Folks:

Well, the calendar says it is Christmas and we have just finished a big Christmas Breakfast (12 o'clock beginning), with turkey and all the trimmings, but for the life of me I can't get the Christmas spirit. Kirby is quite as bad off as far as that goes. It isn't altogether because the weather is not cold, it is cool enough to wear a coat in a car, and we have both spent Christmas at times when the weather was warm. It must be because we have not been madly rushing around buying Christmas presents and getting ourselves all tired out. Or else, it may be because there are no children around here to be talking it up all the time.

We have calmly gotten ourselves packed and ready to go off again Kirby North and I South, and it all seems the same daily routine of things. We have had a nice stay here in Calcutta. Kirby has kept me busy typing most of the time, and I have rested much.

We sent up to Darjeeling last week, and it was raining when we got there and the next day was the thickest fog I ever saw. It cleared up for a few minutes while we were out walking, and we got a small glimpse of Kitchinjunga, which is 28,000 feet high, just a thousand feet shorter than Everest. Everest must be viewed from a place called Tiger Hill, and is away off and just the top of it can be seen, but Kitchinjunga is just across the valley from Darjeeling, among a score of smaller hills. They say you really have to look up to see Kitchinjunga, and on clear days it looks very close, but the base is 20 miles away. It was quite cold up at Darjeeling, about 7,000 feet high, and of course the fog and rain made it colder still. We were very much disappointed, and more so, since we could have gone any other time, but some of the people had told us that December was the best time, and did not know that it often rained just around Christmas time.

Kirby had been working so hard or eating too hard, or something, because he got relaxed going up on the train and took a headache. It may have been caused by the altitude, anyway he got a dull headache, and when we returned, instead of going right on out to Santiniketan where Tagore has his school, we came back to the Y.W.C.A. and he rested and then got some more work done. I told him it was his subconscious mind coming to his rescue. He really wanted to come back and work, and we had seen Tagore once, and although it would have been nice to see the experimental school at Santiniketan, he did not feel as if he could spare the time, and so to get a good alibi for not showing up as we had planned and promised, he just got a headache as an excuse. Or maybe he wanted to be babied and petted. Anyway, we got the work done, Or most of it, and if he wants any more before he reaches the boat, he will have to do it himself.

I am going down to Madras and Madura and there will be lots and lots of things to see and tell you about. Will be with YMCA and missionary people who will take good care of me. The trip down will probably not be crowded at this time, and ought to be rather nice. Maud is also staying in the south while Sherwood goes to the Lahore conference. Perhaps next week we shall have more to tell. Most of our mail is at Madras. We got a picture of Mary taken in the summer camp. Rather welcome I'll say.

Lots and lots of love to a ll,

Yours,

Alma